Rubric to Determine Need for Special Circumstances Paraprofessional Support

Student: DOB: Eligibility: Date:

Teacher: Program/School:

Completed by: Title:

Mark the box that includes factors that best describe the student in each rubric category that is appropriate.

	Health/Personal Care	Behavior	Instruction
0	General good health. No specialized health care, procedures, or medication taken. Independently maintains all "age appropriate" personal care.	Follows adult directions without frequent prompts or class supervision. Handles change and redirection. Usually gets along with peers and adults. Seeks out friends	Participates fully in whole class instruction. Stays on task during typical instructional activities. Follows directions with few to no additional prompts
1	Mild or occasional health concerns. Allergies or other chronic health conditions. No specialized health care procedures. Medication administration takes less than 10 minutes. Needs reminders to complete "age appropriate" personal care activities.	Has adult direction but occasionally requires additional encouragement and prompts. Occasional difficulty with peers or adults. Does not always seek out friends but plays if invited.	Participates in groups at instructional level but may require additional prompts, cues, or reinforcement. Requires reminders to stay on task. Follows directions, and to remain engaged in learning.
2	Chronic health issues, generic health care procedures. Takes medication. Health care intervention for 10-15 minutes daily (diet, blood sugar, medications). Requires reminders and additional prompts or limited hands on assistance for washing hands, using bathroom, wiping mouth, shoes, buttons, zippers, etc. Occasional toileting accidents	Has problems following directions and behaving appropriately. Can be managed adequately with a classroom behavior support plan, but unable to experience much success without behavior support implementation.	Cannot always participate in whole class instruction. Requires smaller groups and frequent verbal prompts, cues, or reinforcement. On task about 50% of the time with support. Requires more verbal prompts to follow directions. Requires signing 50-79% of the time.
3	Specialized health care procedure and medication. Limited mobility. Physical limitations requiring assistance (stander, walker, gait trainer or wheelchair). Special food prep or feeding. Healthy or sensory intervention 15-45 minutes daily. Frequent physical prompts and direction assistance for personal care. Requires toilet schedule, training, direct help, diapering.	Serious behavior problems almost daily. Defiant and/or prone to physical aggression which may be harmful to self or others. Requires a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) and behavior goals and objectives on the IEP. Requires close visual supervision to implement BIP.	Difficulty participating in large group. Requires low student/staff ratio, close adult proximity, and prompts including physical assistance to stay on task. Primarily complies only with 1:1 directions and monitoring. Abilities and skills require strategies/adaptations not typical for class as a whole, such as: Discrete Trial, ABA, Structured Teaching, PECS or Assistive Technology. Requires signing over 80% of the time.
4	Very specialized health care procedure requiring care by specially trained employees (G tube, tracheotomy, catheterization). Takes medication, requires positioning or bracing multiple times daily. Health or sensory related interventions 45 minutes or more daily. Direct assistance with most personal care. Requires two person lifts. Direct 1:1 assistance 45 minutes or more daily.	Serious behavior problems with potential for injury to self or others, runs away or aggressive on a daily basis. FBA has been completed and the student has a well-developed BIP that must be implemented to allow the student to safely attend school. Staff has been trained in the management of assaultive behavior.	Does not participate in a group without constant 1"1 support. Requires constant verbal and physical prompting to stay in task and follow directions. Regularly requires specific 1:1 instructional strategies to benefit from the IEP. Cognitive abilities and skills require significant accommodations and modifications not typical for the class group. Requires signing 100% of the time.

Special Circumstances Paraprofessional Support
Summary Sheet

Student: DOB: Date:

Eligibility: Teacher: Program/School:

Completed by: Title:

Check areas of intensive need that might require additional paraprofessional support:

Health/Personal Care	Behavior	Instruction	Inclusion
☐ G-tube feeding* ☐ Medication* ☐ Suctioning* ☐ Food preparation ☐ Diaper changing ☐ Feeding-full support ☐ Seizures* ☐ Lifting/Transfers ☐ Other: *Specialized physical health care plan or emergency plan.	☐ Behavior plan implementation or documentation ☐ Physically aggressive ☐ Non-compliant in class ☐ Non-compliant on campus ☐ Runs away ☐ Self-injurious ☐ Other:	☐ Unique strategies not typical for class ☐ Visual communication system ☐ Structured teaching ☐ High levels of verbal prompts ☐ Assistive technology support ☐ Sign language ☐ Other:	☐ Instructional support ☐ Physical support/positioning ☐ Safety supervision ☐ Social support ☐ Transitions ☐ Recess/lunch ☐ Other:
Areas of Need			
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

For each area of need in which further independence is possible, develop an IEP goal & a plan for frequent monitoring for the purpose of fading the paraprofessional support. Other ongoing supports should be noted in the Supplementary Aids and Services page of the IEP.

Paraprofessional Needs Matrix:

Student Name: **Review Date:** **Date:**

Classroom Teacher: **School:**

Paraprofessional assigned (if applicable):

Unique functional and/or educational needs requiring para-pro support.	Activity or the time of day	What can the student do independently?	What does the student need assistance with?	What accommodations might permit the student to complete this activity independently?	Identify ways to promote positive social interaction and/or independence.	What will be the specific responsibilities of the para-pro?

Total amount of time needed for paraprofessional support:

Re-Evaluating and Fading Paraprofessional Supports

Fading Existing Supports

Freschi (1999) encourages teams to set a timeline and establish criteria for when supports will be faded. Paraprofessional supports should always be considered temporary (Giangreco, 2010). All team members, including parents, school staff and the student, should have input into the creation of a fading plan (Giangreco, 2010). *Techniques to Promote Independence and Fading Support* is available to assist with fading strategies. *Classroom Routine (Appendix A)* is completed during the initial phase and should also serve as the foundation for fading paraprofessional supports.

How to Formulate a Stepping Down Plan

It is common practice in the area of special education that a student is assigned a Para-educator for consecutive years without reconsidering the need for service. Seldom is there a re-evaluation of the allocation of time that the Para-educator is assigned to a student. From one year to the next, a student may make considerable progress academically and emotionally. Natural development may promote maturity in areas of self-control, attention and concentration, social skills, and common-sense judgment. Since the inception of the Para-educator as a helpful assistant, there may have been some form of medical intervention, e.g. medication. Such factors may mitigate the original reasons for the Para-educator recommendation. Certainly, chronological age, development, and transition to the next level of education are reasons to reconsider an evaluation for a Para-educator. This re-evaluation is especially critical for transition years to middle and high school programs if the student continues to have a Para-educator with him/her.

The Stepping Down Plan is implemented when a student already has a Para-educator. When considering the implementation of the Stepping Down Plan there is a question regarding whether the student continues to need the Para-educator.

PARA-EDUCATOR RE-EVALUATION

When this question emerges it typically means that the case manager, in collaboration with the teachers, believes that the assignment of the Para-educator, who may have been with the student for some time, needs to be revisited and re-evaluated by a group of professionals.

Possible Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes at the conclusion of re-evaluation.

1. The student may continue to require Para-educator on a full-time basis.
2. The student may need the Para-educator on a part-time basis.
3. The student may not require a Para-educator at all.

- Students who already have a para-educator assigned to them have this provision guaranteed through the IEP process.
- Consideration for a re-evaluation of this service is a rather delicate issue for the IEP team, including the parents, to grapple with, given the fact the para-educator is part of the educational plan.
- A first step in the process when considering re-evaluation and possible reduction of services is for the TEAM LEADER to inform parents that the staff wishes to explore whether the same level of “need” exists from the original date of installment of the Para-educator.
- Questions relevant to whether the student requires the same arrangement with the para-educator usually creates “worrisome” thoughts for parents.
- The team leader is mindful that the parents feel comfortable with the support model and believe the Para-educator is essential to the student’s academic and social success.
- The dialogue with the parents includes reasons for the re-evaluation at this point in time, and the possible intervention options that may result from the data collection (full-time, part-time, or no Para-educator).

- It must be stressed, however, that if the data concludes a modification of the arrangement is necessary, the team leader tells the parents that a *Stepping Down Plan (page 14)* is carefully crafted to be a slow, prudent, and a reasonable process of implementation.

The Stepping Down Plan:

Step 1: Document the student's name, grade, observation dates, and case manager's name.

Step 2: Complete the Reason for Re-Evaluation. This section delineates the reasons for the observation process. The specific reasons may include that over time the student was working effectively in the classroom setting. The team leader includes comments that reflect that a level of independence was observed by teachers over a period of time. Also, it is very important to verify this level of independence with tangible evidence of performance, e.g., test grades or accuracy on activity sheets.

Step 3: Complete the Summary of Observations. The summary contains a description of the results from the
data that was collected across settings. This summary is a brief overview of the results and reflects the basic reasons for the decision to create Stepping Down Plan. It does not replace the narrative report. The summary also contains clearly defined reasons for the method of withdrawal of the Para-educator.

Step 4: Agreement and Non-agreement: If there is a non-agreement for reduction of services, then the team leader indicates to parents that the observation team has recommended a reduction of Para-educator services. The team leader briefly reviews the steps that were offered to reduce the Para-educator's time and the reasons for the decision. The team leader concludes the meeting, and offers the parents an opportunity for further discussions outside the realm of this process to perhaps mediate a reasonable compromise.

When there is consensus for agreement, the team leader proceeds with the participants into the next phase of the Stepping Down Plan. This part of the meeting is to develop the formal *Stepping Down Plan-Schedule of Withdrawal* of the Para-educator. This withdrawal procedure is crafted in two phases.

Step 5: Rating Classroom Performance-With the completion of this summary, the participants review the student's grades from the previous report cards.

Step 6: Completion of Schedule-with the summary, the team leader begins to place the duration of time, e.g., 15 minutes of leaving the classroom, a start date, and the school time.

Step 7: Signature Phase-With the *Withdrawal Schedule* complete, the participants agree upon a date to begin, and sign the agreement.

Step 8: IEP Provision-*The Stepping Down Plan* with the schedule is attached to the student's IEP, and distributed to all staff members who have responsibility for the student.

Stepping Down Plan:

Student's Name: **Grade:** **Observation Dates:** **Case Manager:**

Summary of Observations:

Academic Status (report grades or description of ungraded):

Areas of high levels of Independence: (Please rate 1=low score, 5=high score)

	1	2	3	4	5
Reading	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	1	2	3	4	5
Math	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	1	2	3	4	5
Language Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	1	2	3	4	5
English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	1	2	3	4	5
Social Studies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	1	2	3	4	5
Science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	1	2	3	4	5
Nonacademic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

Stepping Down Plan:

Phase	Time (mins.)	Duration	Start Date	School Time/ School Activity
1	10 15 20			
2	30 35 45			

Strategies for increasing independence:

Agreement was reached on:

Case Manager Signature_____

Parent(s) Signature_____

Techniques to Promote Independence and Fading Support:

a) Watch before assisting. Can the student ask for help from a teacher or peer?
b) Can the student problem solve on his/her own?
c) Have high expectations for what the student understands or can do independently.
d) Provide consistent classroom schedule (posted, visual, at desk if needed, reinforcement periods included. Teach student how to use it.
e) Start with the least intrusive prompts to get student to respond:
f) Prompt, then back away to allow independent time.
g) Use strengths and weaknesses, like and dislikes
h) Model: guide (watch and assist); check (leave and check back)
i) Teach independence skills (raising hand, asking for help, modeling other students)
j) Encourage age appropriate work habits. See what other students are doing
k) Be aware of proximity. Sit with the student only when necessary
l) Encourage peer assistance and partnering. Teach peers how to help, but not enable
m) Utilize self-monitoring checklists for students
n) Color code materials to assist with organization
o) Use transition objects to help student anticipate/complete transition (i.e., head phones for listening center)
p) Break big tasks into steps
q) Use backward chaining (i.e., leave the last portion of a cutting task for the student, then gradually lengthen the task)
r) Assist in encouraging a means for independent communication (i.e., PECS)
s) Provide positive feedback (be specific to the situation)
t) Ask facilitative questions ("What comes next?" "What are other students doing?" "What does the schedule say?" "What did the teacher say?")
u) Give choices